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HOW TO PAY THE RENT.

"Mercy!—I give in—I submit—take all you want!"

THE MINOR DRAMA.

No. III.

HOW TO PAY THE RENT.

A Farce

IN ONE ACT.

BY TYRONE POWER.

11

WITH THE STAGE BUSINESS, CAST OF CHARACTERS,
COSTUMES, RELATIVE POSITIONS, ETC.

NEW YORK:

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EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION.

THIS farce was originally produced at the Haymarket Theatre in April, 1840. It fully established itself, the first night, as one of the merriest things going; and it says not a little for its merits, that notwithstanding the united attractions of the authorship and acting of the lamented Power, which attended its first representation, it still retains its place on the stage as one of the most mirth-provoking after-pieces. Power, as *Morgan Rattler*, with his truckle bed for furniture and a rope line for wardrobe, was always gloriously at home in the piece, and acted with wonderful effect upon the risibilities of his audience. Mr. Collins is also very successful in the part. It is one of his best; and while he plays it with uniform good taste, there is no lack of spirit in his delineation. Indeed, the applause he has received in enacting this creation of Power himself, shows that the mantle of that thorough type of Erin is recognised as having fallen upon worthy shoulders.

With regard to the *morale* of the Irishman's peculiar mode of paying the rent, we must confess it is not a little dubious; although, in the particular instance brought before us in the representation, the principle is divested of its worst feature, by being made the instrument of rescuing a poor widow from the gripe of a merciless landlord. In this respect it will compare quite favourably with but too many instances of every-day occurrence, in which the *end*, as well as the *means*, is alike selfish and objectionable.

This piece is quite a favourite at the Park and Olympic theatres, where it is frequently performed, Mr. Nickinson ably sustaining the part of *Morgan Rattler* at the latter establishment.

CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	<i>Haymarket, 1840.</i>	<i>Park, 1847.</i>	<i>Olympic, 1846.</i>
<i>Morgan Rattler</i>	Mr. Power.	Mr. Collins.	Mr. Nickinson.
<i>Miller</i>	" Strickland.	" A. Andrews.	" Everard.
<i>Swell Billy</i>	" Caulfield.	" Pearson.	" Bleeker.
<i>Blowhard</i>	" Gough.	" Gallot.	" Clark.
<i>Shooter</i>	" Clark.	" Povey.	" Barnet.
<i>Star the Glaze</i>	" Green.	" Sprague.	
<i>Pay the Reckoning</i> .		" Matthews.	" B. Roberts.
<i>Snuffy</i>		" Milot.	
<i>Porter</i>		" Heath.	" J. Roberts.
<i>Mrs. Conscience</i>	Mrs. Clifford.	Mrs. Vernon.	Mrs. Hardwick.
<i>Kitty</i>	Mrs. Matthews.	" Knight.	Miss Clarke.
<i>Betty</i>	Miss Grove.	" Burrows.	Mrs. Everard.

Time of Representation, One Hour.

COSTUMES.

RATTLER.—Brown or black frock coat, plaid trousers, and red neckerchief.
MILLER.—Old-fashioned brown coat and trousers, with long queue.
SWELL BILLY.—White over-coat, flashy dress coat and waistcoat, dark trousers, white gloves, &c.
BLOWHARD.—Officer's blue undress frock, white pantaloons, and Hessian boots.
SHOOTER.—Dark Mackintosh, brown frock coat, drab trousers, &c.
STAR THE GLAZE.—Brown over-coat, striped waistcoat, white trousers, &c.
MRS. CONSCIENCE.—Dark silk dress, white apron, and muslin cap.
KITTY.—Light muslin dress, apron, &c.
BETTY.—Drab dress suitable for a maid-of-all-work.

EXITS AND ENTRANCES.

R. means *Right*; L. *Left*; R. D. *Right Door*; L. D. *Left Door*;
 S. E. *Second Entrance*; U. E. *Upper Entrance*; M. D. *Middle Door*.

RELATIVE POSITIONS.

R., means *Right*; L., *Left*; C., *Centre*; R. C., *Right of Centre*;
 L. C., *Left of Centre*.

N.B. Passages marked with Inverted Commas, are usually omitted in the representation.

HOW TO PAY THE RENT.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An empty room in Chambers—windows at side, door in F., another, R.*

Enter MILLER and MRS. CONSCIENCE, C.

Mrs. C. I tell you, Mr. Miller, it's too much money.

Mil. Pooh! stuff! I tell you, it's not money enough.

Mrs. C. Not for you, I know—you'd let a back cellar to a poor laundress for the rent of the Royal Exchange if you could, and distrain her mangle for the first week's arrears.

Mil. Consider the enormous outlay in papering, in painting, gilding, and glazing. Tax-gatherers incessant and insatiable, of all denominations, with damned long fingers, forever fiddling about one's pockets; besides innumerable acts of private munificence that no one ever knows of except myself.

Mrs. C. I believe that your private charity is quite unknown. Moral character, truly—it's fine talking, but if everybody was told what somebody knows of—

Mil. Pish! hold your silly tongue.—[*Aside.*] She knows I'm in her power, though it's a nuisance that I must bear with, I know.

Mrs. C. No need of that, Mr. Miller; I'm not too old to get a place, and with a *twenty-two years'* character from so *moral* a man as Churchwarden Miller.

Mil. Pish! be silent; you know well enough I'd never let you leave my service.

Mrs. C. I know you wont—and for no love of me either; you know I've a tongue.

Mil. I know you have.

Mrs. C. Ay, and you fear that I might use it.

Mil. No, no, I don't—I know you better—but be silent; walls have ears and echoes, don't trust them; when you've a secret to talk about, go into the middle of a five-acre field, and don't speak above a breath then, unless the grass has been newly cut. You're a good woman, and a good chamber-keeper—but only not florid enough in style, a little dull in description, too matter-of-fact to fill your empty rooms fast enough—I'll send you the *Morning Post* for an hour, once a week—read the auctioneers' advertisements—there's a study! Puffing elevated to poetry, and poetry rendered at last practically useful.

Mrs. C. I'd let the chambers fast enough, without either lying or flummery, if you'd let me put a low rent on them. But to ask forty pounds a-year for a room like this!

Mil. And why not, if I can get it, eh? Mind your door keys, and give me advice when I ask it.

Mrs. C. I will—and not before you want it; and now, before you go into the city, what's to be done about poor Mrs. Barry—this is half-quarter day, she isn't suited, but has got a friend to take her in, and, to accommodate you, she is ready to go.

Mil. Ah, ah! she's a decent woman—I expected she would, so I told Saunders and Pop that they might fetch in his Excellency Don Pillard de Publico's furniture this afternoon—I am impatient to have the Polynesian Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary a lodger under this roof. Mrs. Barry is a well-disposed woman.

Mrs. C. That she is, and a very long time your tenant.

Mil. A little too long—owes me a *whole half*, and the last half-quarter up to this day.

Mrs. C. Lookye, Mr. Miller—excuse my freedom, but are you quite sure about the whole half?

Mil. Sure!—eh! what do you mean?

Mrs. C. Mrs. Barry says her late husband must surely have paid you as regularly as usual.

Mil. Oh, did he! has she any receipt to prove it?

Mrs. C. No; poor Mr. Barry was ever careless about such matters. It's rather odd, I must say, often as you came here, you never said anything about the half-quarter due, till poor Mr. Barry was defunct; but however, you'll not lay hands on the poor sorrowful soul—you'll let her go?

Mil. Do you think me a New Zealand cannibal? Tell her, with my best compliments, to be sure and leave by four o'clock.

Mrs. C. And her furniture—what am I to say about that?

Mil. Tell her, with my compliments, we'll take the greatest care of it—if she has any way within a week or two of paying the rent—

Mrs. C. If not, you'll get your Friend Squeeze to appraise it—Mr. Miller, have a little compassion!

Mil. So I have—only you've too much sensibility for a lodging keeper.

Mrs. C. And you've too hard a heart for a Newgate turnkey. Ugh! I can't look at you with patience, you smooth spoken serpent, you cruel old crocodile. [*Exit, c.*]

Mil. What does not my respect for public morality compel me to put up with from this hag? If she were but dumb, I'd get her a snug place in Marylebone work-house.

KITTY pushes open door at R., and peeps on—after a moment's pause, she advances, R.

If the widow's goods leave a *very* profitable balance, I'll make her a present of a sovereign or *two*; her friends will be sure to get up a subscription—my name for one or *two* sovereigns will look liberal.

[*Kitty taps him on the shoulder.*]

Kit. So it will. Don't be frightened, I won't tell what I overheard you say.

Mil. Ah! you little wicked—ha! ha! ha! and what *did* you overhear, eh, you rogue in petticoats?

Kit. Why, you were saying how well your name would look put down for five pounds, to head a subscription for my poor mistress.

Mil. [*Aside.*] How like the little baggage is to her aunt!—Heigho! you know I'd do anything in my power for the widow of poor Barry.

Kit. That's just what I've often told my mistress; don't be afraid, madam, says I; Mr. Miller's not half so hard-hearted as he looks—and you're not, Mr. Miller, are you?

Mil. You've the softest peach-like cheek, Kitty—

Kit. Yes, I know—but don't keep yours so close to it,

it's bad for your cough—then I'll tell my mistress you're coming to see her, for she's waiting to go out.

Mil. Stop, stop, baggage—you're like an eel. [*Mrs. Conscience appears at the back, as Miller pulls Kitty back.*] To have and to hold—zooks, you've put me in such a flurry to catch you—heh! heh!

Kit. You'll surely bring on your cough, if you put yourself in a flurry, and so let me go. Oh! see, se—

[*Sees Mrs. Conscience, laughs, and runs off, R., as Mrs. C., severally regarding Miller and Kitty, advances to her situation.*]

Mrs. C. Mr. Miller! what have I seen, Mr. Miller—my head's on fire.

Mil. [*Aside.*] I should like to poke it into the water-butt to extinguish it.

Mrs. C. Isn't it enough to have seduced the *aunt*, but you must use your serpent-like fascinations to rob the niece of her virtue? Mr. Miller, do you recollect what you were twenty-nine years ago, and when you were serving old Pat Wiggins, in Thomas street, Dublin?

Mil. I do—I was a smart handsome young fellow, journeyman candle-maker to the old Irish soap-boiler, with pockets as full of nothing as your silly head.

Mrs. C. And were you not the deluder and deserter of poor Betsy Bustle, the bonnet-maker, of Bridget-alley.

Mil. Bah! how could I help it—all the force of circumstances; didn't old Pat Wiggins die, because, as he said, the doctor made him put too much water in his whiskey—could I account for that? After I'd married my master's widow, would I have acted like a moral character to have consorted with a concubine?—Could I control fate?—did I ask Betsy to die? and when she did, didn't I act in the most considerate manner by the baby-boy she left behind; poor loose woman, didn't I pay you nobly for its keep for nearly eighteen months?

Mrs. C. Five shillings a-week! and when you were leaving Dublin for London, who was it that bribed me to pop the beauteous baby into the Foundling-basket, swearing that one day you'd send over for it.

Mil. Well, and when, twelve years after, I sent all the particulars, and made inquiry, didn't I get for answer, that the little vagrant had run away from a respectable tailor,

at nine years old—a scamp—whose fault was that? and why am I to be eternally reproached for a little slip, which would not be regarded by any but a man of delicate feelings, anxious to keep his moral character fair in the world's eye?

Mrs. C. I often told you what evil would come of it.

Mil. You did very often, and a plaguy long time it has been coming—since then my course has been always up the ladder.

Mrs. C. Take care it don't end in a drop from one. It's a long lane has no turn.

Mil. Croaker! Just look back—first, my old wife died; then I came over to London, bought a partnership in the city, a good lively business—soon after, my partner died, childless, leaving me sole executor; since, I've built houses, then created chambers, filled office in the vestry with honour, and now look upwards to the common council, on the Radical Moral Universal Reform interest; and if you don't blab *on* me—Hush!

Enter KITTY, R.

Well, smiler!

Kit. My mistress is waiting to see you, sir; her furniture is mostly packed, and all ready to move.

Mil. Good girl; then, Mrs. Conscience, [*Crosses, c.*] tell the broker's man to move all the furniture carefully into the garret, and take special care of it till Mrs. Barry can send for it.

Kit. (L.) Then you'll keep her goods—and mean time, her poor dear children must sleep on the floor?

Mil. Poor innocents, I hope not—though a soft bed is anything but wholesome for children—it checks the digestion and stints their growth—ha! ha! rogue in petticoats, I'll go up stairs and comfort the dear lady. [*Exit, R.*]

Kit. Take care I'm not behind your back as you're coming down, for if I am, I'll certainly push you to the bottom, you miserly, miserable old sinner.

Mrs. C. This is sad doings, my dear; but do you know of no friend of Mr. Barry, to whose kindness you might appeal for his widow?

Kit. Why, I have an inkling of hope—there is a countryman of Mr. Barry's, for six or seven years was a sort of

pupil of his ; this very man, Mr. Rattler, I met yesterday, and knew again ; he seemed sadly hurt to hear of poor Mrs. Barry's condition and trouble, and said he should have great pleasure in kicking old Miller immediately ; he lodges only two doors off, at old Fustian's—I'll go and speak to him again.

Mrs. C. Go, my child, and pray for poverty and happiness, for surely, over-much money always brings misery for a bedfellow.

Kit. I don't know what over-much money may bring, but in these days, without a little lucre, a poor girl is not likely to get bed or bedfellow.

Mrs. C. I don't know how it is, but when Morgan Miller was a good-looking journeyman soap-boiler, poor and penniless, he was, I think, a better-hearted, and I'm sure was a lighter-hearted man. Poor Betsy's orphan ! he'll never turn up, I dare say, though I tied a little tablet of his mother's about his neck, when I left him in the basket. Ah ! often in the dead of night I hear the flutter of wings, and see that little cherub's face smiling over the tester, whilst a loud voice shouts in my ear—

Rat. [*Without, below, c.*] Judy, you devil, where are you ? holloa !

[*Mrs. C. screams.*]

Enter OLD MILLER, *as from above, hastily, r.*

Mil. Go down and answer—

Mrs. C. Go down and answer ! You'll have to answer and go down, you sinner ! Oh, dear, I'm a going to faint—I know I am—hold me up !

[*Seizing him.*]

Mil. Go away, woman ; for shame—go, go.

[*She still clings to Miller.*]

Enter RATTLER, *singing, c.*

Rat. “Go to the devil and shake,” &c.—Ah ! here's my tatterer ! So-ho ! what, a rendezvous ! I'm in the way, perhaps—spoil sport.

[*Mrs. C. crosses to L.*]

Sings—“It was a place, a place so lonely,
A place for love and lovers only.”

Beg pardon : if I'm *de trop*, say so, I'm off—call again when you're less interestingly occupied.

Mrs. C. Why, dear me, sir, you don't suppose—

Mil. Sir, this is a respectable house, and I'm a moral man : you don't imagine, sir—

Rat. Pardon me—I did—I did imagine, but I was out for once, I find. I wronged you, and I ask pardon. The lady's age is a guarantee for *her* respectability. I reverence antiquity too much to injure it even in idea; but really, when I came in, the place—your perilous proximity to a petticoat! No man, sir, is more moral than myself when away from temptation; but you know what our first of moralists says,—proximity, importunity, and opportunity, are sometimes an over-match for poor humanity.

Sings—"When away from the girls,
I'm a saint, sure, my dear;
But the saint he draws off
When the lassies draw near."

Once more, your pardon, and to business: are you, madam, the keeper of these chambers?

Mrs. C. Oh, dear, I'm so flurried!—Y-e-s, sir.

Rat. Exactly: may I ask what apartments are to let, with instant possession?

Mil. This very charming room where we now are is to let, sir.

Rat. Oh! who's your fat friend?

Mrs. C. [*Smiling.*] My master, sir.

Rat. Master—oh, I comprehend. *Anglice*, husband—you, then, sir, have the felicity to share this lady's nuptial couch—sir, I congratulate you.

Mil. Poh! she's my servant, sir.

Mrs. C. Ha! ha! ha!

Rat. You are *not his* wife? then, madam, do you accept my congratulations, whilst on the gentleman I bestow my pity.

Mrs. C. Ha! ha! *husband*, indeed! Well, what odd folks go to make up a world. [*Crosses to c.*] Mind, don't let him slip, he'll pay 40*l.* a-year as sure as my name is Conscience, and yours is not—husband, truly! Ha! ha! ha! Oh, bless your merry face—wife, indeed—ha! ha! ha!

[*Exit, c.*

Mil. An old fool—ha! ha! ha!

[*Snarling.*

Rat. Ha! ha! ha! Excuse me, sir, but that old lady's laugh is infectious, cheering to herself, and kindling mirth in all that catch the sound. Sir, I love a hearty laugh—it's a sure sign of a good heart and a light conscience. Excuse me, sir, but do you ever laugh? [*Eyeing him.*]

Mil. Sir!

Rat. [L.] Never saw a finer head—would make a glorious model [*aside*] for the knocker to a sponging-house.

Mil. (R.) Pray, sir, be covered—this room's unfurnished, and has a cold air.

Rat. You're right, sir—I'll oblige you. You must know I'm rather singular in my ideas of furnishing.

Mil. Like to have enough, I dare say, sir?

Rat. [*Aside.*] Just enough, and none to spare.—You're right, sir, I do like enough, indeed, more than enough for my own wants.

Mil. I understand, sir—you have the good fortune to be a married man.

Rat. No, sir—I have the good fortune not to be a married man.

Mil. Exactly so: this is a charming location for a bachelor—small room to the left, quite large enough to sleep in.

Rat. Can't sleep in a small room—when I'm abed, I require air and exercise.

Mil. I see. Well, if your bed doesn't take up much space—

Rat. It does not, I assure you. But have you no other rooms? only these?

Mil. The whole suite below—six on one floor.

Rat. Just my number—I'll take the floor.

Mil. But, unluckily, it's already occupied.

Rat. Then I won't take it—that's settled. What's the rent of this cock-loft?

Mil. The quietest part of the house.

Rat. Tranquillity is essential to my temperament.

Mil. How lucky! By eight o'clock you may hear a mouse stir on that stair.

Rat. I'll engage you may a good many, and see them too—a serious tax on Cheshire—but the rent, that's the rub?

Mil. Well, sir, since you're single—for I object to children—

Rat. I don't wonder at it, if they always cry as loud as when I came up stairs: I heard sixteen shrill trebles screaming a full chorus.

Mil. Ahem! hem! yes, I know, but all born on the

premises ; in that case, you know, sir, the landlord can't be held responsible.

Rat. I don't know that—at all events, if I ever marry I quit these premises. But for the last and third time, the rent ?

Mil. Didn't I tell you—dear me, sir, 20*l.* the quarter.

Rat. 20*l.* a quarter ?—I see, that is 60*l.* a year—the lodging's mine, say no more, there's my hat.

Mil. I beg pardon, but you've made a slight mistake in addition—20*l.* per quarter is 80*l.* per annum.

Rat. Then I take down my hat, Miller : but stay—after all, what's the odds ?

Mil. Only 20*l.* a-year : it will make very little difference to a man like you at the year's end, I dare say, sir.

Rat. Well, that's true : as you say, it will make mighty little difference to me at the year's end, so I'll let my hat stay, since it is hung up.

Mil. I could have let it to a foreign ambassador, who has taken the floor above, but I'd rather take less money from a countryman.

Rat. A what ! are you an Irishman ?

Mil. No, sir.

Rat. Thank Heaven ! [*Crosses to R.*]

Mil. For what ?

Rat. Nothing—I never saw a face I more admired to look upon—a natural curiosity ! An open brow, clear hazel eye, an up look, liberal lip, round dimpled chin, and a head set on and shaped like Antinous—in fact, there's an all-overishness about the *tout ensemble* of your figure and physiognomy, that would at one glance reconcile the moodiest misanthrope to the humanity he had renounced for ever.

Mil. [*Aside.*] 40*l.* over-dear—ha ! ha !—What name may I—

Rat. Who, me ?—oh, name ?—Rattler—Rattler—Morgan Rattler.

Mil. M. Rattler, Esq. ; and where can I call for the reference of—

Rat. Oh, ay ! I see—the reference ! to be sure—next door but two to the post-office : you know old Thingamy, the draper ?

Mil. What, Fustian's? oh, I know him—and might I ask Mr. Rattler's profession?

Rat. Portrait-painter, artist—but I've not done much lately; I intend, however, again zealously to devote myself to pencil and palette.

Mil. Ah, ah! a painter! I thought I—

Rat. Did you, though! Well, you wer'nt out for once in your life—you saw me struck with your physiognomy. I must get you to give me a sitting for an antique groupe I'm about to commence: you've a glorious expression for Silenus.

Mil. Ah! it's a tolerably profitable calling—I—

Rat. Calling! profitable! calling what? is it oysters, or new potatoes, you mean to be "calling"? Painting, sir, is an art!—an art, one of the most inspiring that ever lifted the soul or lighted the eye of genius—what glorious recollections of the mighty dead do we not owe to the pencil, more faithful than the pen! Of what millions, yet unborn, may not the painter claim gratitude for the transmission to their admiration of the worthies of his time; endowed, by the cunning of the skilful painter's hand, with all but immortality, the patriot, the hero, the lawyer, the poet, the player, will from the undying canvas still stimulate our children, with a living look, to emulate their fame, speaking hope to the faltering and shame to the degenerate. [Crosses to L.

Mil. I love the art myself—I had a painter tenant with me for four or five years: his name was Barry—mayhap you know him?

Rat. Know him! poor Barry—excellent well! I knew him as intimately as I hope to make you know me before we part.

Mil. That door opens to Mrs. Barry's rooms—I may as well draw the bolt. [*Bolts R. D.*] I'm going to get her out to-day.

Rat. Get her out!—oh, yes!

Mil. They were her children you heard squalling so,—nasty little beasts.

Rat. [*Aside.*] I must either get into the open air to cool my blood, or create space here by tossing my fat friend out of the window. Poor Barry! But, psha!—Mr. Miller, I shall have my valuable furniture brought here im-

mediately, so do you make the most of your time in preparation—as a matter of course you'll call on Mr. Fustian—but I'll answer for his satisfying you on any point relative to his lodger.

Mil. Why, as a matter of form, you know—though in point of fact, I dare say, in this case I should be just as well off without any reference.

Rat. In point of fact, in this case you were never more correct in your life—as a matter of form, you may be right; but for any additional advantage you'll reap from the inquiry, you might just as well spare your breath and save your shoes.

Enter MRS. CONSCIENCE, C.

Oh, here's my old lady—do me the favour to see this room nicely dusted, cleanly swept, fire lighted, and windows opened—and here, give this half-crown to your Cinderella below stairs, with my service to her dust-pan.

Mrs. C. With your what, sir?

Rat. My compliments to her coal-scuttle. [*Exit, c.*]

Mrs. C. Ha, ha! bless your merry face.

Mil. Now, Mistress Conscience, for the future, when there's a tenant to be talked over, send to me. Oh! 40%. a-year's too much—you'll never let the room and closet—ha! ha! go, comb your cat and answer the bell.

Mrs. C. Well, but surely you didn't ask that nice young man 40%. a-year?

Mil. You're right, I didn't: I asked him 80%.—ha! ha! ha! that was all.

Mrs. C. Mercy on us, where do you expect to go to?

Mil. Where? why, where rents are high, taxes low, and tenants plenty—ha! ha! ha!

Mrs. C. 80%. a-year!—he never means to pay it.

Mil. May be not, but his furniture will. I'm going to old Fustian's for his character—but, if his things come, let the furniture into the yard—I'll see with a glance what like his furniture is—I'll be on the watch, and here as soon as him with the agreement all ready—quarterly payment—six months' notice—I see he's a soft-headed, addle-pated poor devil, so we'll keep his pockets light. Oh, it's a ruinous thing in London for a young man to have too much money to spend; it leads him into every sort of peril, mo-

ral and physical—that would be a pity—eh! eh! eh! 40% overmuch—80%. not! eh! eh! who laughs now? eh! eh! eh!

[*Exit, c.*]

Mrs. C. Ha! ha! ha! poor silly gripe-all; there he goes, as pleased with his roguery as my cat with a ball of worsted. Now, I'll set Betsy to dust over this room, and open the windows, and—dear me, there's somebody trying Mrs. Barry's door—who's there?

Rattler. [*Inside, r.*] It's me, you devil—hold down your head, I'll blow you a kiss through the key-hole.

Mrs. C. Why, 'tis the new lodger—how did he get in there? stop—I'll draw the bolt. There—why, mercy on me, do you know Mr. Rattler, Kitty?

Enter RATTLER and KITTY, R. S. E.

Rat. She does know Mr. Rattler, my mother of the Graces—and Mr. Rattler knows her, since she was the height of a pound brush, and designs to know a good deal more of her yet; taking advantage of Mrs. Barry's absence, I've been casting an eye over the family, which, for the future, I here adopt as my own, at least, till they find another and a better father.

Kit. I'd not desire to have a better father, for my part.

Rat. Is it for your own children you mean, gipsy? wouldn't you be proud of a dozen or two little Rattlers?

Kit. Mercy on me, what things you do say! but I must see to the children, and get all ready for this rare scheme of yours—I'm sure no good will come of it. [*Exit, c.*]

Mrs. C. Pray, did you know Mr. Barry a long time, sir?

Rat. Long enough to know his worth, but too short a time to prove my gratitude.

Mrs. C. Ay, you must have met him before he came over to England, perhaps?

Rat. I'll tell you where we met—it was in Sackville street; he met me with a pair of black eyes, a bursting heart, and a bleeding nose, after a hard-fought battle with a red-headed cad, on whose beat I had presumed to hold an officer's horse—my near-won victory was about to be revenged by the whole of my antagonist's faction, who'd have pummeled me to death, as an invader of the soil, only Mr. Barry came to the rescue—he questioned me,

and finding me friendless and forlorn, he took me home—he had no children then, his young wife received me, fostered me, fed me—I felt stupefied at first, and bewildered, but in a few days a new world broke in upon me—there I was clothed, comforted, and caressed—yes, caressed—for the first time in my life, I received a pressure of kind arms, and felt a woman's warm bosom beating against mine; those caresses aroused feelings as yet unborn within my heart, love and gratitude. I thank heaven they are here still, after years of chance and change, as warm and glowing to my benefactress as when first awakened by her sweet voice of pity within the chilled heart of the outcast wandering orphan.

Mrs. C. Then bless your warm heart, it does one good to hear thee—I could find in my heart to kiss thee, I could.

Rat. And why the devil don't you—never check a generous impulse.

[*They embrace.*]

Mrs. C. And so poor Mr. Barry took care of thee, did he?

Rat. He did, my old lady—taught me his noble art; for eight years I was his pupil, companion, and friend, till the failure of a bank swallowed up his means, and he resolved to quit Ireland. Just before this event he had advised me to travel, and furnished me with means; I went to Italy, and having lost sight of my master, soon got into mischief, dabbled in politics—lured by that most comprehensive word “Liberty,” was a prisoner in an Austrian fortress, escaped and fled to Turkey—since then I have been a pilgrim at Jerusalem, a doctor in Egypt, a soldier in Spain, an idler in Italy, and, I'm afraid, a vagabond in all places—but I have now an object in life, and I henceforth devote myself to it—the art which my dead master taught me, shall cherish his children, and cheer the heart of his widow.

Mrs. C. But if you've got to work for your bread, don't you think, now, you are going to pay too much rent here, young man?

Rat. Not a ha'porth; I'm not going to pay any rent at all—I have been in London two years, and for the last year and a half haven't paid a farthing; pay rent, indeed!—if I hadn't scorned to be illiberal, I might generally have received a handsome premium for leaving my lodgings,

besides a receipt in full for all demands whilst I remained in them.

Mrs. C. What, and sent your furniture ?

Rat. And my furniture—what ! do you think I sneak out after a stout defence ; no, I always conclude honourable terms, and march out with bag and luggage, head erect, and colours flying—so shall Mrs. Barry, or my name's not Rattler.

Mrs. C. Ah, you don't know Mr. Miller !

Rat. No—and Mr. Miller doesn't know me, but he shall before many minutes are over his head.

Enter KITTY, in haste, c.

Kit. There's a large waggon-load of furniture just coming into the yard, and Mr. Miller coming up stairs.

Rat. All right—vanish, Kitty, and have everything ready ; now, old lady, do you run down and desire my furniture to be brought up here off that waggon—and hark ye—if a few gentlemen ask for me, show them up here.

Mrs. C. Poor young man, he's brought his furniture to a fine market. [*Exit, c.*]

Enter MILLER, c.

Mil. What, you're here, eh ? my dear sir, I'm delighted to see you here, hope you'll find everything quite to your satisfaction.

Rat. The same to you, old gentleman—all right at No. 10, eh ?

Mil. Never was more satisfied—I only wonder Mr. Fus-tian let you go at all.

Rat. Why, I do believe, *entres nous*, if I'd have stayed a year longer, he'd have kept me for nothing.

Mil. I believe it—never heard a man speak more highly of a lodger. I saw a waggon coming in just after me—furniture ?

Rat. I know, mine's there ; I'll have it up.

Mil. There's a little agreement, if you please to sign it—six months' notice, payment quarterly, my usual plan ; here's pen and ink—I always carry it about me, and as my carriage is now waiting to take me to the city, you'll excuse my hurry—hope no offence ?

Rat. None in nature. [*Signs.*] There !

Mil. [*Signs.*] And there—that's all I shall want of you just now, Mr. Rattler.

Rat. That's quite right—[*Aside.*] because that's all you're likely to get, I can tell you, either now or till doomsday—oh, here's my furniture!

Enter PORTER and BETTY, with a truckle-bed, common mattress tied up in bedclothes, a chair reversed, containing basin, jug, razor, comb, brush, and little mug, c.—Betsy makes the bed, &c.

That's all right, put down the furniture—bed in right hand corner, stool there for the ould lady—we'll have it all straight as a cow's hind leg in a twinkling; and now, allow me to do the honours of my new apartment. Betty! the chair—Mr. Miller will you do me the honour to sit down on it. [*Hands chair.*]

Mil. Eh, eh! I see you love a joke, Mr. Rattler, eh!

Rat. No man living better—I hope you can take one—that's the thing, unroll the bed, Betty, and then I've only to tumble in—

Bet. Yes, Mr. Rattler.

Mil. You don't mean to say you sleep on that flock mattress?

Rat. On that mattress, sir, I seek my soft repose—watched over by the Muses, and awakened by the Graces. Flock! what do you mean by flock? hair, by my beard! I've manipulated ever knot on its corrugated surface, and it contains hair enough to compose a wig for the Lord Chancellor. Now, my fine fellow, there's something to drink—take this fourpenny bit, the curse of the cads; don't make a beast of yourself, and be ready for the job I hinted at—you know—have you ordered the music?

Porter. Yes, sir; two orns and a horgan. [*Exit, c.*]

Rat. You're a man! Come here, Betty! Betty, here's two shillings; bring me three pound of long eights, and ask the chandler to cut them in two.

Bet. Yes, Mr. Rattler.

Mil. Long eights!

Rat. That's the size. Your shop's in the city, or I'd patronise you. I have a little soiree this evening—a sort of house warming. Light, joy-giving light, is the parent of the dance, of mirth and music, love and wine.

Mil. Candles ! what, fats for a party ?

Rat. Muttons ! honest muttons—can't stand wax, unless you'll stand tic—in that case, send me in a box, I'll give you a liberal order.

Mil. But what have you to put lights in ? I see nothing.

Rat. Eh ? right, nothing—that doesn't matter—stick them against the walls, at equal distances ; your muttons have an adhesive quality, which renders them self-sustainable—but stop, where shall I place my wardrobe ?

Mil. Your wardrobe ! where is it ?

Rat. In my pocket. [*Pulls out a cord.*] Here you are.

[*Crosses, L.*]

Mil. Wardrobe ! why, that's a piece of threepenny cord !—dear me !

Rat. You're a wizard—you've guessed it—'tis, as you'll see, both one and the other—I like an open wardrobe, it preserves one's clothes from moth or mildew, and is easily got at.

[*Drives nails.*]

Mil. Hold ! murder ! murder ! Driving tenpenny nails into the wall !

Rat. Right again ; but what ails you—one would think I was driving tenpenny nails into you, by the noise you make—all right. There, like that ?—my own invention, combining eloquence of outline with harmony of design, and simplicity of detail. [*Arranges cord, and throws coat,*

&c., over it, which he takes out of handkerchief, &c., and leaves chair, c.

Mil. This is too much of a joke, sir—do you think I'm a fool ?

Rat. I do, and a rogue—but if you behave well, I won't expose you to the common council—say nothing, and it's a chance if they ever find you out.

Mil. But I'll take it coolly—I'll take it coolly.

Rat. Do—you'll last the longer ; and you've a good deal to go through yet, old gentleman, I can tell you.

Mil. Will you answer me one question ?

Rat. With pleasure ; propound.

Mil. Is this all the furniture you've got ? And what am I to understand by this proceeding ?

Rat. That's two questions ; however, I'll reply to both *seriatim*. First—This is all the furniture I have in the world—thanks to a hard-hearted hunks, who robbed me,

when and how, I'll now explain to your perfect enlightenment, if not satisfaction. Eighteen months back, I had apartments charmingly furnished, all things fitting an artist, hoping for fair sitters, neat, clean, and *comme il faut*. Just settled, I had an attack of fever—was ill three months; got about at last, exhausted both in constitution and coin. My landlord acted towards me then, just as you desire to behave to poor Mrs. Barry—he sold my all for an old song, and left me pennyless; I swore revenge in the bitterness of my heart against the whole tribe, and have hitherto carried it out fully—since that hour, I have been the nightmare to lodging-house keepers; the cholera is not more shunned when abroad, more dreaded when caught, or gotten rid of with greater thankfulness. Since that day, thank heaven, there does not live a villain with whom I've located who can accuse me of having paid one rap of rent.

Enter MRS. CONSCIENCE, c.

Ah, old lady, how are you?

Mil. Mercy on me—then I'm to expect no rent?

Rat. Precisely; in which expectation, I'll answer for your not being disappointed.

Mrs. C. Dear me, Mr. Miller, he's only joking—he'll pay 80*l.* per year, you know—Ha! ha! ha!

[Sits in chair, c.]

Mil. Fiend! look at his furniture.

Mrs. C. Why, so I have—and want to know where it's all to stand—there's a four-horse waggon-load in the yard.

Mil. I see it all; the ambassador's goods.

Mrs. C. Well, but I saw with my own eyes the men unload something out of the waggon, and said it was for Mr. Rattler.

Rat. You're right as a trivet, you did—may your eyes never deceive more—my man luckily caught the waggon passing by old Fustian's, when my traps were at the door, and knowing the value of making a front before the enemy, he gave his friend the driver a pot o'porter to pop them on the tail-board with the ambassador's things—a fellowship which, I trust, my kit did not in any way disgrace.

Mil. Mercy on me—what roguery—then all that Mr. Fustain said of you—

Rat. Is nothing more nor less than what you'll say of me, when I'm going to leave you, which, if you behave well, I will do at the end of six months.

Mil. Six months!

Rat. It wouldn't answer my purpose to move sooner—but come, no sour looks—if you don't smile every time we meet, till my time expires, curse me if I don't make you pay for removing my furniture to my next lodgings, and find me a hackney coach into the bargain.

Mil. We'll see if the law can't put an end to this swindling.

Rat. Yes, in six months—here's our agreement—besides, I can tell you, the law can't give you a judgment in less time, you may take my word for it—I've studied the point closely, and know it as well as the attorney-general.

Mil. Oh, dear—I think you're a rogue.

Rat. Ditto—I know you're the same.

Mil. A swindler.

Rat. You do, eh?

Mil. A taker-in of honest men.

Rat. No, that's you; you take me in, you know. Anything else pleasant to say?

Mil. You're a man without moral feeling.

Rat. Hollo! now you touch my weak point, I must request you'll withdraw that last observation as being incorrect and out of order. Recall that last remark.

Mel. I will not.

Rat. I appeal to the chair.

Mil. Damn the chair!

Mrs. C. Now your punishment begins.

Mil. Out, croaker. [*Tossing over the chair and going.*]

Rat. Mr. Miller, one moment; will you give me your blessing before you go?

Mil. Give you the devil!

[*Runs against Betty, who is entering with candles, c.*]

Rat. Mind, if you're going down stairs for him, take a candle in your hand.

Bet. Here's a lot.

Mil. Out of my way, slut.

[*Exit in a rage, c.—Mrs. C. laughing.*]

Bet. Here's the candles, and there's such a mob of gents coming up stairs, Mr. Rattler.

Rat. All right; show them up, Betty, my beauty.

Bet. Yes, Mr. Rattler. Walk up, gentlemen.

[*Exit, c.*]

Enter SWELL BILLY, SNUFFY, SHOOTER, BLOWHARD, STAR THE GLAZE, and PAY THE RECKONING—they salute *Rattler* noisily.

Rat. Welcome, boys; this is kind. Bill, your daddie—Snuffy, yours—brought your horn, my Shooter?

Sho. All right behind. [*Takes out a guard's horn.*]

Rat. That's the thing; we'll want music—Blowhard sober, I'll swear.

Blo. So-soish—who's the lady?—hope she's well.

[*Bows.*]

Bil. I say, Rattler, how's your mother, does she know you're out?

[*Bows.*]

Rat. Bill, go easy. This, gentlemen, is Mrs. Conscience, my respectable housekeeper.

All. Oh, ma'am; yours devotedly—hope you'll dance—honour of your hand?

Blo. Might I secure you for the first waltz. [*Crosses, c.*]

Mrs. C. Dear me, what civil gentlemen; but, Mr. Rattler, perhaps I'd best step down stairs till Kitty and all the ladies come.

Rat. Do, my Venus, and shove them all into Mrs. Barry's room nearest this, till I open the door.

Mrs. C. Well, he is a gallant soul—dance, indeed—why not?—la, la!

[*Dances and exit, c.*]

Sho. Now, my Rattler, what's all this? Bill, what's the row? What's the order of the day?

All. What's the row?

Rat. Listen, old pals, fellow scamps, honest minions of the moon, who have so often in company waked the grey-eyed morning with the echoes of our merry chorus, rising from street or square a weary policeman, and the winking stars our only audience—I'm now about to bid you farewell, leave off larking, forswear backey and Burton ale, and learn to look on the sun without winking, to reflect, to repent, and reform.

Bil. Oh, hang reform, I hate it.

Blo. Reform! you?—Hookey—you reform!

Sko. Put on the drag when you're going down hill, no sooner.

All. No reform—no reform!

Rat. Gentlemen, my resolution is taken, and can't be shaken—I wouldn't, however, cut the society like a sneak—but choose to look you all in the face, and say good bye—I've now motives to labour, and stimulant to exertion—I have here found the widow of my only benefactor; she needs my help and yours—may I, in the name of our past fellowship, claim your aid?

All. You may—you may!

Blo. Silence! the gemman's going to reform—you're too noisy, a deal.

Rat. Ha! ha! well said, old Blowhard—but, on the contrary, you're not noisy enough. Give us one of your short chorusses, with the old Pay the Reck'ning accompaniment—I'll lead the band. [*They sing a noisy chorus—*

Rattler leading time with the sweeping-brush—Shooter with horn, the rest with sticks knocking on floor—loud singing.

SOLO.—RATTLER.

Drink, drink deep, my boys,
And never mind the score,
When cash runs low we'll stint our joys,
When flush, we'll drink the more.

Chorus. Drink, drink deep, my boys, &c.

SOLO.—SWELL BILLY.

A bumper now, fill every glass;
Here's health and wealth to you,
And a husband good to every lass
That's comely, kind, and true.

SOLO.—RATTLER.

Then drink, drink deep, my boys,
And never mind the score,
When cash runs low we'll stint our joys,
When flush, we'll drink the more.

Chorus. Then drink, drink deep, my boys, &c.

[*At end of chorus, a knocking is heard from beneath-pause.*

Rat. Hush! what's that?

Blo. Hear anything knock?

Bil. That means, don't like it--no more, no more.

Rat. I beg your pardon—it must mean encore! Blowhard, go down, and in your most elegant manner, suggest that this apartment is taken by an amateur musical society, who meet to give concerts four times a week, but if disturbed by any noise from below, we'll give in addition a ball every other night. [*Blowhard exits, c., and returns immediately.*] Now, grand chorus, and accompaniment—lead on. [Chorus again

SOLO.—RATTLER.

What night too long,
With wine, wit and song,
To wile dull hours away;
We'll make old night, in her own despite,
As cheery as young day.

Chorus. With a whack fal lal, &c.

SOLO.—RATTLER.

When the field lark's lay
First wakes the day,
We'll homeward merrily track,
While from field or square we'll wake the air
With a rousing whack, whack, whack.

Chorus. With a whack, fal lal, &c.

Enter MILLER, in a rage, c.

Mil. What's this, Bedlam let loose? Imps! fiends! devils! Gentlemen, I mean, this is too bad; what does this infernal hubbub mean? [*They teaze him.*]

Rat. Oh, Mr. Miller—your most obedient; a few select friends who came to honour my house-warming. Silence! Mr. Miller will favour the company with a song. Solo—Mr. Miller! Silence!

All. Solo—Mr. Miller!

Mil. Sing, indeed! Mr. Rattler, my coach is at the door! will you let me go in peace to the city, or must I send for the—

Rat. You'll not go till I introduce you, I hope? Damn it, don't look dumpy, it spoils your expression. Gentlemen, don't judge from present appearances—but let me assure you, Mr. Miller, my landlord, is as pleasant a fellow as ever was proposed to the Colley-olly Club?

All. Here's Mr. Miller.

Sho. Mrs. Miller well, sir, I hope?

Blo. And Master Miller, I hope, sir?

Rat. Hoho! sly-boots, you never told me there was a little Miller!

Mil. That old Jezebel must have blabbed. Whoever told you there was a little Miller, eh?

Rat. Yourself—I read it in your conscious blushes; I wonder if he possesses all his father's beauty?

Mil. [*Aside.*] I'll frighten them. Look ye here, gentlemen—if this noise does not cease instantly, I'll call the police.

All. Oh, dear! we've seen them come before now.

Rat. Ah, poor Fustian! the police often came when I lodged with you, but never with your desire—you had a character to lose, and so had your house—but why the devil call the police and injure your lodgings—if my habits displease you, I'm ready to leave at a moment's notice—only say the word “go!”

Mil. Go! by all means—and take your furniture! Here's a deliverance! Good fellows—I forgive all—go, go, only go.

Rat. On condition that Mrs. Barry's furniture goes under our escort, with a receipt in full for all, but the half quarter due—which it is more than suspected is all she owes you.

Mil. One whole half, and a half-quarter. It's my due—my lawful, legal due—the furniture's worth all the money, and more, and I'll keep—

Rat. You won't give up the widow's furniture—best think of it.

Mil. Never! never!

Enter BETTY, with three men having two horns, a street organ, and bells.

Bet. Please, Mr. Rattler, here's the music come, and the ladies are all ready.

Mil. This is infamous—I'll have the law—murder! robbery! [*Bawling,—Betty opens the door connecting with Mrs. Barry's rooms.*]

Enter KITTY, leading four girls, MRS. CONSCIENCE, fol-

lowed by five little children, with rattles, drums, fifes, &c., R.—Children surround Miller, and plague him—then they throw him from one to the other until he gets to R. corner—then two girls seize him and make him dance.

Rat. Partners, gentlemen, and flourish trumpets. *Mrs. Conscience*, by your leave, now a galop—a galop.

[Kitty seizes Miller, others take girls—Rattler with Mrs. Conscience.—Music strikes up gallopade, and all dance till Miller falls exhausted, c.]

Rat. Open the windows—the room's a good deal too warm, and rather too dark—boy, light up candles, and stick them against the walls.

Mil. No, stop—spare my paper. Mercy! I give in—I submit—take all you want—*Mrs. Barry's* furniture—your own—all—only go quickly: before I die, let me see the house clear.

Rat. It's too late now—I don't know that I'll go at all.

Mil. Do, my kind friend—I'll take it as a favour, do.

[Kneels.]

Ras. There's my hand—I forgive you, and we'll go.

Mil. One condition I must insist.

Rat. Conditions to me—no, death or victory—play up music?

Mil. No, no—only hear me, 'tis for your own good; old *Mrs. Jenkins*, at the corner, has a capital lodging, go live with her—let her have my reference, and I'll give you such a character!

Rat. That's just what old *Fustian* said of you.

Mil. Indeed! there's a fellow to get the general post reception over my head—what other government on earth would employ such a treacherous rascal? *[Crosses, L.]*

Enter BETTY, c.

Bet. Please, sir, the porter says the waggon's unloaded, and wants to know is the things ready to put on?

Kit. All ready—only to take down stairs.

Rat. We'll soon do that. Boys! do me the favour to assist in carrying *Mrs. Barry's* things down stairs, out of her rooms.

All. Wont we do that? Come along, Blowhard.

Blo. Give me your fist—you're a trump to the last.

[Exit with the rest into the room, R.]

Kit. But how's the dear children to go, and their mother not come back?

Rat. That's true—they can't walk, or ride on the wagon—and I haven't a mag left to spare.

Kit. There's Mr. Miller's carriage at the door—I wonder if he'd let the dear children ride in it?

Rat. Will he? to be sure he will—I know his benevolent nature; put them all in, and if the coachman says a word, tell him I'll drive them myself—in with them.

[*Exit Kitty.*]

Mil. Oh, dear! oh, dear!

Rat. Now, meantime, I'll trouble you for a receipt in full for Mrs. Barry. Come, you've always pen and ink, you know; I'll be back in a crack.

[*Exit, R.—Miller sits down and prepares to write.*]

Enter MRS. CONSCIENCE, at back.

Mil. I wish you'd cracked your neck before you ever came here! come, I'm not ill out of this scrape—she does only owe me the half-quarter—Eh! eh! eh! they think they've done me, but I'm not so easy—hem!

Mrs. C. Look at that—[*Presents a tablet which she has picked up*—did you ever see that tablet before? Look at that name—it's your own.

Mil. Morgan! well, what of it?

Mrs. C. This was Betsy Bustle's—she worked your name in it—I tied it round your baby's waist, when I left him in the Foundling box. It dropped from one of their hats; one of their hats covers the head of your son.

Enter RATTLER and the rest, with furniture.

Rat. Here, take these plates a moment, old boy. [*Thrusts a pile of plates into Miller's arms.*] One minute—and here, hold this till I get my—[*Sees tablets.*] Hollo! don't pocket my tablets, old lady—they are my whole paternal inheritance.

Mrs. C. Is that your name?

Rat. My only name, till Mr. Barry added the characteristic addition of Rattler, which makes me Morgan Rattler, at your service.

Mrs. C. Are you a Dublin foundling?

Rat. I was, some eight-and-twenty years ago? [*Miller*

drops plates and sinks into chair.] Hollo! murder! save the bits—he's thrown down the dishes! Take him to the pump!

Mrs. C. Never mind the dishes, but throw yourself into your father's arms.

Rat. My father—what's this? a soap-boiler, a manufacturer of dirty muttons, a retailer of ha'penny dips, damme! I'd rather never have had a father, old lady—if you're not sure, give me the benefit of a doubt.

Mrs. C. No doubt, no doubt, you're his son—his only son, and he's your only father.

Rat. Well, it can't be helped. Father, take your prodigal to your arms—wont you, pa? [*Kneels.*]

Mil. Keep him back—I'm bewildered—I'll never acknowledge him—he's a vagabond, he's an immoral character.

Mrs. C. Who's fault is that?

Mil. He's an immoral character, he doesn't pay his rent!

Rat. I will for the future, I give you my honour—papa, papa!

Mrs. C. Look at him!

Rat. Ay! look at me?

Kit. How can you hold out?

Mil. The voice of nature for the first time speaks within me.

Rat. Better late than never! what does it say, papa?

Mil. It bids me claim my son!

Blo. Touching—an't it, Shooter?

Sho. All right behind.

Rat. For the first time, the voice of nature bids me call you mother—an't you my mother?

Mrs. C. No, my child, I'm not.

Rat. Then, for the first time, the voice of nature's wrong!

Mrs. C. Interesting orphan—your mother's dead—she was called Betsy Bustle.

Rat. Poor Betsy Bustle!

Kit. My aunt.

Rat. My dear cousin. [*Embraces her.*] Father, I fear you must increase your family.

Mil. Well, my son, we'll see about that—this is all so

very odd—a sort of dream—do you know I can't help liking you—indeed, I'm not sure I didn't like you all the time you was worrying me, for the sake of the widow.

Enter BETTY, at back.

Bet. Please, sir, the dear children's all by the coach, but the coachman won't let them in without orders. [*Exit, c.*

Mil. I'll go down and speak to him, he shall take 'em to their mother, and I'll go with them myself, poor orphans!

Rat. Spoke like your son's own father—one moment, and I'll go with you. [*To the audience.*] I'm aware that some present may object to the lesson we have given to-night, on the mode of raising the rent, forgetful of the motives which excuse it; from that generous and disinterested portion of the public that have no rents to receive, I anticipate no disapproval—but should any hard-hearted landlord offer opposition, take care that I don't see him; for, if I do, I'll hire his lodgings for six months, as sure as my name is Morgan Rattler.

DISPOSITION OF THE CHARACTERS AT THE FALL OF
THE CURTAIN.

SHOOTER	MRS. C.	MIL.	RAT.	KITTY.	BLOWHARD.
R.]					[L.

THE END.

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